

4. "Another problem with people fail to examine themselves is that they often prove all too easily influenced. When a talented demagogue addressed the Athenians with moving rhetoric but bad arguments, they were all too ready to be swayed, without ever examining the argument."

Martha C. Nussbaum, *Les Emotions democratiques. Comment former le citoyen du XXI siecle ?* (2010)

Socrates claimed that unexamined life is not worth living. He considered knowledge to be the highest virtue. As each man is a microcosmos, perhaps the first and highest task is to know oneself. Sun Ce claimed that if one knows himself and his enemy, he will win every battle, but one that does not know himself already lost every battle in advance. Knowing yourself is the pre-condition for knowing about the world. It may be indeed one of the highest and most needed wisdoms. But to how many people is that wisdom truly reachable? Those that know themselves, those that question the world and the system, those that think critically have always been a minority.

Seemingly, power of the people in our era is bigger than in any point of history. Unlike economical equality, believing in the equality of everyone's freedom, rights, and the participation in the democratic process has become a common attitude. I am going to argue about the nature and worth of democracy, while taking in to the account the nature of voters, and compare it to the alternative forms of governance.

One of the questions about democracy is if it is intrinsically or instrumentally valuable. Does it contain value in itself and by itself, or is it of instrumental value, meaning that the value is in the decision and consequences of the democratic way of governance. The belief that democracy is intrinsically valuable has its roots in the belief that equality is intrinsic value. Democracy, due to that has also value in itself, as it treats everyone equally. However, it would seem that that belief is on "thin ice", as one can argue pretty reasonably that it is neither the case that equality has intrinsic values, nor does democracy treat everyone equally. Equality sometimes does not have intrinsic value. There is nothing valuable by itself in two people being equal in misfortune, although we tend to believe that there is some value to it. Our intuitions about it, however, come from the psychological relief that someone is in the same situation as us, burdening the same hardships, which makes it more probable for us to receive help and understanding. That, however, is of instrumental value, as that value is in the better psychological state, and in the higher probability for cooperation. Even if we accept that equality has intrinsic value, it seems that it is not the case that democracy's value is grounded on that. Treating everyone equal is not the absolute prerequisite for democracy, and in many forms of it, it does not treat everyone equally. Most people would not call the decision to, for example, lynch the minority, or not to practise democracy anymore, democratic, even if the majority voted for that. To protect the rights of the minority, many countries have systems where minorities' votes count more than the others. For example, representatives of the minorities need 1-2% of the votes to have a seat in the parliament, while the others would need more.

The other reason for democracy's worth, some would say, is that "I make the decisions myself". We tend to believe that that has value for us. We want to make the decision for ourselves, even if they lead to bad consequences for us, we want to experience and learn from these mistakes. How many and for how much time would they be pleased if an expert made all the decisions in their life for them? We do tend to believe that each individual has right to decide about himself, about his individual decision, but applying that to any kind of collective decision making, even democratic, and

thinking that it still contains its properties is a delusion. Different rules apply to individual decision making and rationality, and collective ones. I may have right to make a decision and face the consequences of my decision about which university will I go to. It is not the same with the decision concerning a law that applies for the community. Hobbs thought, that through social contract, we abstain from (some) of our rights to make cooperation possible. We do that in order to escape the “natural state”, where every man has rights to everything, and is in the constant state of war and conflict. So when we achieve cooperation, we abstain from our part of our rights in decision making in order to make the cooperation possible and to preserve it. I cannot make the decisions myself for the community, except if I am not the supreme monarch and ruler. When a community is made, the individual must accept the decisions that are in the best interest of it. It applies to both democratic process, and to when an expert or a ruler makes the decision himself. In both cases, I abstain from my rights to make the decision myself in order to stay in the community. The only difference is that in case of democracy I surrender my rights to the majorities’ decision, not to a ruler or an expert. I may want X, while the majority votes Y, it is the same as with the expert or a ruler making the decision, in the context of an individual. I let a majority or a ruler to impose their decision on me. Taking these arguments in to the account, next I am going to argue about instrumental value of democracy, namely how efficient form of governance and decision making it is, taking into the account the nature of voters.

Winston Churchill claimed that the best argument against democracy is a five minute conversation with the average voter. First thing that would be noticeable, that in reality, the average voter is uninformed. The voter gets most of his informations from the media. Media’s goal is not making the democratic process to have more quality by educating the voter. It is selling news and making profit. That is the problem of “free media”. Also there are cases some where some media are more and some are less free than others, in terms of how much they are influenced and biased by a political movement or a party. Taking also the laziness of the average voter to educate himself into the account, we conclude that there are few cases where the voter is capable of making rational judgement. However, what incredible is that in spite of that fact, everyone has a need to form some kind of political beliefs or at least an attitude towards the current situation, and usually to become pretty biased and firmly to hold on that belief. They lack information, capacity, and interest to examine the actual facts and arguments. That is what makes the perfect soil for manipulation. Due to lack of information, the voter forms his beliefs on irrational grounds. He is easily swayed by this irrationality. He is easily swayed by appeals and emotions. When a politician makes a moving rhetoric, while knowing and appealing to these traits of voters, he can seduce the majority to vote for an irrational option, even if that option is completely against the interest of the community. Another problem that exist in democracy is also due to the nature of the voter. That problem is the irresponsibility of the voter. It is common to hear a belief that one vote does not change anything. In bigger countries where one vote would be 0,00001% that belief would not be unusual. That leads many voters not to use their right to participate in the voting process. That can lead to a considerable percentage of voters not participating in the process. It is not rare that the actual majority remains not participating.

Another topic I would like to address to is two sorts of democracy. Namely, we have a direct and indirect democracy, both of which are suffering from their respective problem, which I am going to analyse. In direct democracy, decisions are made through referendum in which the people vote to make it, while in the indirect, decision are made by representatives chosen through the democratic process. The problem of uninformative and lazy voter I already addressed is the major problem for both sorts of the democracy, but it is the primary problem for the direct one. Imagine if each decision in society was made by referendum. Each law and sentence. Even if the voter was

interested and informed, that would be extremely inefficient for society. Except for the obvious material one, because unacceptably high taxes would be needed to finance all the referendums, another problem is that the voter would be too preoccupied to actually do anything else in society efficiently. That is why elections and referendums are much more rare, and we have democratically elected representatives whose job is to make the decisions in the society. However, the problem of the voter being not informed and unable to always vote rationally applies to this sort of democracy as well. Here primary problem is the voter being swayed by appeals and emotions. Everyone claim that politicians lie. Election of your representative has become a marketing parade of false promises and presenting oneself in a better light. The voter choose his representative based on the media's propaganda and the representative's charisma. That is why more and more politicians dress and act like they are some kind of Hollywood star. It is all a matter of appeal. That is why we even have reality TV stars on the position of political power. Democracy gives rule and power to those that are most capable on acquiring that power and rule, not to those that are most capable to efficiently use that power to rule!

Democracy was a form of government that was used even in the ancient Greece, and since then it had both its opponents and supporters. There is a legend that Plato on one occasion said, pointing to the three shepherds on the hill, that he does not believe in democracy, as long as those three can outvote Aristotle and him. Since the trial and conviction of Socrates, Plato was against democracy. He believed that the average man is too easily swayed and seduced by irrational argument and emotion to bring any kind of important social decision. Instead he thought that the decision should be left to those that devoted their life to enlightenment and wisdom. Namely, philosophers. In his famous work "The Republic", he presented his idea of an ideal state. He applied the qualities of the soul to a state. His carriage metaphor where reason is the driver that controls the two horses, spirit and appetite, shows how he believed the state should work. He believed some people had one quality on the soul that is primary, and that would determine their place in the society, namely either a philosopher, guardian or a seller (farmer, worker). Both Plato's and Aristotle's thoughts about ideal form of rule and state were a direct continuation and had a foundation on their thoughts on metaphysics. Plato's case it is function, harmony and enlightenment, while Aristotle's is his thought about universal purpose of every dimension in nature. Both of them believed that people are not equal and that justice lies in them adequately functioning in their roles and tasks for which they were born in to. Plato, however, did approve some kind of social mobility, as he believed that a philosopher-king can come from any caste. The reason for such thinking was the origin of Socrates.

Another belief, on the contrary to Plato and Aristotle is Hobbes's'. He believed that all people are equal. But because they are all equal, namely because they have relatively equal power to kill each other, they are in a constant state of war. In order to escape that war and achieve peace, individuals form a contract. In order for them to respect that contract and preserve peace, the rule of absolute monarch is needed, Hobbs argued. The danger of a wicked monarch with absolute power is unimportant, compared to the possibility of coming back to "natural state". He believed that democracy and oligarchy is not efficient because the power is divided, the "Leviathan" or a state is most efficient when it is embodied in one person.

Another political ideology that treats everyone equally and need one ruler is communism. While it can be in some cases better for making rational decision, and does indeed treat everyone equally (except the ruling class, creating the so-called "Red Burogisse"), it fails to take human nature into the account. It rests on the presumption that everyone will take what they need and work as they can. Human nature as countless examples in history showed, is not like that. Human greed, competition with others, and ambition to rise above the masses were always the strongest motivators.

While democracy can lead to making irrational and inefficient decisions, monarchies and one-party system showed that they are also not lacking in hypocrisy, corruption, and danger of irrational decision. I stated that due to the nature of the average voter, majority is not probable to make the best decision. However, the voice of people is far from not important. It would be irrational, inefficient and unjustified to completely subdue them under the absolute rule, even under the best decision made by an expert. Taking into the account all that was said, there are two forms of governance that I would suggest as the most rational and efficient. First would be a democracy with plural voting. Instead of valuing all the votes equally, those more likely to make the best decision will have more have the value of their votes higher. People who would have more valuable votes in such a system would be evaluated solely under a criterion of their education, experience, and IQ. Any kind of other criterion including national, racial, or religious ethnicity would be unacceptable.

Second form would be an aristocratic parliament where the representatives of the people are limited to a certain percentage that is not the majority, for example 30%. The value in these kind of governance is that it does not neglect its people's say, while it optimizes the efficiency and rationality of the decision. Most people are irrational, emotional, and suggestible but it is them that give the state and the government its power. It is an imperative that the government must be in their service and function to their interest and benefit. Ideally I would compare that relationship in some aspects with a relationship of a wise parent and a child. While the child can be irrational, spoiled and ask for unreasonable things, wise parent listens and observes his child, no matter how unreasonable its wishes are, a wise parent makes the most rational decision, taking into the account those wishes and the maximum benefit for the child. That emotion and irrationality of the people must not be completely neglected. It must be taken into the account, if one wants to rule efficiently.

In an ideal world, democracy and even communism in their true form, would work. However, both of them are asking and expecting too much of the people. Concretely, democracy fails to consider the imperfection and fallacies of the average voter. Good education system is a pre-requisite for democracy, but even if we strengthen our institutions to that required extent, we must not forget the true nature of the masses and the average man. He does not always know what he wants from the society and how to, how to get what he wants, in the masses he is easy to seduce and manipulate. Most men are too eager and fast to accept the irrational argument, without considering and thinking critically and reasonable about it, succumbing to emotion. Not everyone can achieve wisdom, examine and know the nature of himself and the world, and not everyone is suited to make decisions to govern, and to rule. As Hobbes stated, the one that is going to rule over a nation, must not read only himself or some other man, but the entire human kind.